2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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outside the town, and as darkness fell the guns of the fort ceased to boom their still unfinished salute.

The next day the Political Officer took me to see the place where Seager had been attacked as he, all unsuspecting, walked with his wife, a brave lady who did her best to beat off her husband's assailants until the Government Guard escort could come up. They had been told by Seager to follow some little distance behind so that he and his wife could enjoy their stroll in private. There I found a small heap of stones marking the spot and I had them scattered because there was no point in perpetuating the memory of a shameful incident. Seager had, I am glad to say, recovered, and the would-be assassins had been punished, that is, those who had not fled to the security of the Yemen. As far as I was concerned the chapter was closed.

There was time to spare before we were due to lunch with the Naib, so I formed my escort into a line of beaters and for an hour or so we wandered over the slopes of the nearby hills and found some hares among the scrub. Then back across the plateau to Dhala and up to the castle where I had first stayed twenty years before.

The Naib met us at the entrance and after I had inspected the Guard of Tribal Guards I was ushered into a long narrow room where some of the guests had already assembled. We shook hands and took our seats on the floor around the walls. I was seated at one end on the right of the Naib and on his left was the Political Officer, and as more and more guests entered they gave the customary salutation and we rose and I shook hands with them and they took their places round the walls. The guests were a curious collection, most of those present being tribal leaders and notables from the area, but there were others from neighbouring districts and, of course, the soldiers of my escort and my own personal servants. The people of Dhala have one serious vice and that is that they grow and eat Qāt, which absorbs a great deal of their vitality and practically all their money; in consequence, they are physically well below the ordinary standard of the Protectorate, and in appearance I think they are best described by the American adjective "mean". Personally, I have always liked the country better